

# Memo

Contract No. E22PS02  
Task No.: 11.2

**Date:** July 1, 2011  
**To:** Mary Ainsley – Director of Design and Construction  
**From:** Karen Arpino-Shaffer – Deputy Program Manager  
Beverley Johnson – Public Involvement Consultant  
**Subject:** Lechmere Station Workshop – Kennedy/Longfellow School, Cambridge – June 29, 2011  
**cc:**

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## LOCATION/DATE OF MEETINGS:

Kennedy/Longfellow School, Somerville, 158 Spring Street, Cambridge, MA – June 29, 2011,  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** See attached attendance list sheet.

**PROJECT TEAM:** Mary Ainsley – MBTA; Karen DeSpirito – MBTA; Michael McBride – HDR/Gilbane; Karen Arpino-Shaffer – HDR/Gilbane; Bob Cone - HDR/Gilbane; Janice Bergeron-Martin – HDR/Gilbane; Vanessa White – HDR/Gilbane; Melissa Farrell – HDR/Gilbane; Michael Izzo – HDR/Gilbane; Ibrahim Yattara – HDR/Gilbane; Beverley Johnson – Bevco Inc.; Deneen Crosby – Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge LLC; Josh Burgel – Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge LLC; William Lyons – Fort Hill Infrastructure Services LLC; Todd Blake – Fort Hill Infrastructure Services LLC; Jason Ross – Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc.; Mike Epp – Kleinfelder/SEA; Arthur Spruch – Kleinfelder/SEA; Kyann Anderson – Kleinfelder/SEA; Tom Jin – Kleinfelder/SEA; Bernie Christopher – Kleinfelder/SEA; Wai-Ming Kuo - Kleinfelder/SEA; Marlana St. Martin – Kleinfelder/SEA

**PURPOSE OF MEETING:** A Lechmere Station Design Workshop Meeting was held with the public, providing them the opportunity to give input on the Lechmere Station: design; site circulation; traffic impacts; and general urban design context. The goal of the meeting was to hear community concerns and gather feedback to help guide the Design Team on the future station design. The workshops were advertised on the Green Line Extension Project Website; electronic mail blasts; meeting flyers; and press announcements.

The Design Team will incorporate many of the comments received into the architectural design plans and present an update of the new station design to the community in the fall of 2011.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND:** The MassDOT/MBTA Green Line Extension Project will extend the existing Green Line service from Lechmere Station to the northwest Boston corridor communities of Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford, with an extension of the main line to Medford and a spur line to

July 1, 2011

Lechmere in Cambridge. The project will improve transit service, mobility, and regional access for residents and visitors in Cambridge, Somerville, and Medford.

Bringing light rail service to these densely-populated cities will address longstanding transportation inequities, result in fewer automobiles on local roads, and help to combat greenhouse gas emissions and other components of air pollution. The Green Line Extension will also support municipal plans for local economic growth and provide residents of environmental justice communities with faster rides to jobs, schools, health care, and other destinations.

**WORKSHOP OVERVIEW:** The station workshop focused on three key areas: (1) Station Design; (2) Urban Design; and, (3) Community Concerns. A summary of comments received by the community, workshop photos, and the attendance register are attached at the end of this memo.

The workshop format included three major segments: (1) Project Overview Presentation; (2) Breakout Groups; and (3) Reconvene, Wrap-Up and Next Steps.

1. **Project Overview Presentation** – A Power Point presentation that included: Team Introductions; Green Line Extension Overview; Workshop Goals and Objectives; and Station Presentation. Following the presentation, the meeting attendees were separated into “Breakout Groups.”
2. **Breakout Groups** – Each breakout group had a Design Team moderator, a meeting note scribe, and a technical expert to listen, document, and address concerns raised in the breakout groups. The Design Team technical expert answered design questions and concerns relating to the following subject matters: (1) Station Design; (2) Urban Design; and (3) Community Concerns. At the end of the breakout group session, one group member (Team Captain) was asked to recap the group’s concerns and issues, and all attendees reconvened into the larger group.
3. **Reconvene Into Larger Group, Wrap-Up and Next Steps** – The attendees reconvened and the designated Team Captain shared their group’s thoughts and ideas. A Wrap-Up and Next Steps was presented to the audience.

July 1, 2011



**Communities of Cambridge gather for Design Workshop on Lechmere Station.**



**Community discusses concerns over roadway and traffic issues.**

July 1, 2011



**Community asks questions on Urban Design of Lechmere Station.**



**Mike Epp - Kleinfelder/SEA shows a 3D dimension of Lechmere station during the design workshop.**

## Workshop Comments

### Station Design

1. The station lobby should be as close to the street (O'Brien Highway) as possible.
2. The station needs something that will make it more prominent on the East Cambridge side.
3. Take a look at the 1980's "Wallace/Floyd" solution that extended the lobby to the O'Brien Highway.
4. Elevate the station lobby/plaza.
5. Having a major front door/entrance at Lechmere Square is key.
6. Will the viaduct completely shelter the buses?
7. Could the station be oriented so that it straddles First Street?
8. The north entry way to the station is pretty small. The lobby should be more proportional to the south side entrance.
9. Signage or an identifying element on the viaduct over First Street would help announce the station.
10. Is there any consideration of energy-generating features to offset the operating costs of elevators/escalators and lights?
11. The lobbies are too small.
12. The station seems to have its back to East Cambridge.
13. The station does not have four equal access points.
14. Make this station like Davis Square.
15. Where will the fare gates be located?
16. Make the Water Street entrance a clear and comfortable experience for the patron.
17. Residents are concerned that the bus area isn't entirely covered.
18. Look at the East Cambridge Planning Study and incorporate some of those ideas into the station design.
19. Consider putting a station entrance off Water Street.
20. Can space heaters be provided at platforms?
21. Shifting the station closer to Water Street would be better.
22. Is there just one entrance?
23. How high are the steps in the station?
24. Where will people be waiting if there is bad weather?
25. Can the platform be moved?
26. Do the train cars have to be side-by-side?
27. Will a solar hot water heating system be included in the new station?
28. Can the sustainability program include wind control through wind generators?
29. Will a bus shelter be provided?
30. What materials will be used to build the station?
31. Is there a way to create a back entrance that is closer to the neighborhoods? A doorway could be created on the north side of the building so neighborhood commuters won't have to walk around the whole building.

July 1, 2011

32. Will a roof be installed on the upper deck? Will there be a rain shield?
33. Why can't there be coverings on the sides for wind block?
34. There is concern about the rain, wind, and weather elements along the platform. Since this is a new station, these issues should be addressed.
35. What materials will be used for the rest of the station? Do not use much aluminum. Will it be a massive green thing? What will it look like?
36. Will up and down escalators be used?
37. What will be the capacity of the elevators?
38. As of now, is there a second egress?
39. How far along is the project in terms of the plan?
40. Is there a possibility of putting the transformer underground?
41. Can the transformer be moved to the other side of the station? What is the size of the transformer?

### **Urban Design**

1. Has the East Cambridge Working Group Plan been considered?
2. The quality of experience getting to the station is important.
3. Community members would rather take a longer route if its safer.
4. How will the Glass Factory Building be protected from buses?
5. The new station should be integrated with blocks Q and R.
6. How much longer will it take to get from the old station to the new station platforms?
7. NorthPoint Extension should be landscaped and there should be a direct line of access from the Boulevard to the station through the parking lot.
8. Think about a median in the parking lot for people to walk.
9. The plaza is not enough. Why not take some parking spots from the Glass Factory to create a larger lobby/sightline to the station. This will make the area stronger as an urban place.
10. The station is not apparent from O'Brien Highway.
11. Make the crosswalk across O'Brien Highway a different material so that it is more noticeable.
12. What is happening with the coffee shop/bank/newsstand. The presence of these businesses impacts the decision on where people enter the station. Things that are in certain locations influence the point of entry for users.
13. Bus circulation around the station needs to be looked at closely.
14. Create a plaza level for pedestrian continuity from the station entrance through Cambridge Street.
15. Why is most of the bike parking on the east side of First Street?
16. Why so much parking? Porter Square has no T parking.
17. Ensure that East Cambridge returns its bus service to First Street.
18. The open space on the First Street side might productively be explored as a potential site to provide vertical access.
19. Emphasize Fifth Street crossing for main mall entry to take pedestrian pressure off First Street Crossing.

July 1, 2011

20. Try to shift mall traffic down towards the main mall entry to ease pedestrian flow at First Street.
21. Quantitatively, what is the number of riders coming from the East Cambridge neighborhood to the station?
22. There is heavy pedestrian traffic between the station and the mall.
23. Is a pedestrian overpass possible over O'Brien Highway?
24. How will you be separating public and private property lines? There needs to be a clear distinction so people are not walking on private property, i.e., Water Street condos.
25. Did you guys figure out how long it takes to get from the old station to the new station?
26. If you're driving northbound, how do you get to the station?
27. Since Central Square is a wide intersection, there is concern that pedestrians won't have enough time to cross the street.
28. What is the reason for the restriction on Cambridge Street?
29. Is there a designated place to cross on Cambridge Street?
30. Can you put landscaping under the viaduct and around the bus drop-off area?
31. What's the parking lot going to look like and where will it be located?
32. Will the accessible parking lot be moved?
33. What's going to be at the Plaza?
34. Could a deal be made to exchange the current Glass Factory parking lots so that the T can use the current lots for themselves and the Glass Factory can have a "reasonable exchange" for other equally convenient lots.
35. The group was split: Some wanted the exchange, the Glass Factory residents pay for the parking spots, and were not interested in getting uprooted to a more distant parking lot.
36. What's the accessibility path down Water Street?
37. Please give consideration to the width of sidewalks on Water Street. What options would work with a 5 foot width sidewalk?
38. Will there be a bump out?
39. Please factor in the number of people traveling to and from the station when determining sidewalk width.
40. Will the ugly chain fence around the parking lot be changed?
41. What is going to surround the parking lot, i.e., trees or what?
42. Will there be dedicated parking at the end of the line for MBTA riders?
43. What is the time frame of replacement of the parking lot?
44. Can there be parking on the plaza?
45. Why should a passenger have to come from School Street down to pass First Street, and then Charles Street to Cambridge Street to get to the station? Can there be a better way?
46. When the station moves, what's the connection to Water Street?
47. How will it be determined where people will walk through at Water Street and the Glass Factory?
48. Will there be green trees at the north side of the tracks?
49. Where will the busway be located?

July 1, 2011

50. If O'Brien Highway will be lowered, can the road be lowered in Harvard Square?
51. Shouldn't commuters be directed down Land Boulevard?
52. What are the plans for the open triangle? Will it be a development?
53. What is the exact property boundary for the station? Is there curvature?
54. Can the bus route loop through the center of the station/intersection instead of down Water Street? This will eliminate additional noise and the sharp turn. The corner of O'Brien Highway and Water Street has an entrance to the Glass Factory that is heavy with residents/pedestrians including little children.
55. All access should be on one side of the station where there are wider streets, closer to Green Line passengers who won't be waiting on Water Street.
56. Where will bike storage be located?
57. There is a concern with the boundary markings, and clear, easy pathway, along with access to the station to keep people from crossing over their private property and lawns.

### **Traffic**

1. Clarify if a traffic bump/raised sidewalk will be included for crossing McGrath Highway.
2. Why is Cambridge Street one way? Why can't you widen it and make it two-way in final condition? You are making a good crossing better and making O'Brien Highway worse. Why can't you make O'Brien Highway narrower to ease the pedestrian crossing during traffic signal cycles?
3. Concerned about pedestrian safety at O'Brien crossing.
4. Concerned about pedestrian safety at First Street and Cambridge Street.
5. The widening of Route 28 is going to create longer and more dangerous pedestrian crossings.
6. Is Cambridge Street going to remain one way?
7. Could an 18 wheeler make the turn on O'Brien Highway?
8. The crossing time on Cambridge Street and O'Brien Highway is short.
9. Traffic will be backed up to allow pedestrians to cross. This will be an issue.
10. One of the problems is that this is a highway and traffic here is heavy.
11. Have you considered cutting the corners instead of the right turn?
12. How will traffic coming down First Street be addressed?
13. Can the traffic be slowed down? Can there be a secondary way?
14. Will people on Museum Way get stuck in the middle of traffic with people trying to get on Route 93 or Storrow Dr?
15. Can all traffic be stopped to allow pedestrians to cross?
16. Is Water Street a triggered signal light?
17. People don't care about obeying signal lights or crosswalk signals.
18. Cambridge Street should be widened and O'Brien Highway should be reduced.
19. There should be additional crossing at the mall.
20. What is the plan for calming the traffic on O'Brien Highway?
21. The speed of vehicular traffic on O'Brien Highway is a concern.
22. How many traffic lanes will there be in each direction?

July 1, 2011

23. Why are there going to be bike lanes on the highway? Can they be included on the sidewalk instead?
24. Concerned with the already packed traffic on Third Street, particularly at Third Street and Binney.
25. Concerned with one travel lane and how it works.
26. There is concern about widening the highway and traffic patterns.

### **Accessibility**

### **Cost and Schedule**

### **Retaining Walls/Noise and Vibration**

1. What's the retaining wall made of? Would it be possible to do a transparent wall?
2. How will the noise and vibration issues be addressed?
3. What is the height of the noise wall? What materials will it be made of?
4. Will there be a noise barrier for buses?
5. Who will maintain all the wind breaker walls, and noise walls?
6. How well will the sound wall work with the windows open?
7. What studies have been done? Any sound mitigation?

### **Utilities**

### **Bridge Design**

### **Community Path**

1. Please show path continuations better on these plans.
2. Create an improved pathway.
3. Who will be in charge of the end of the Community Path where it connects with Charlestown?

### **General**

1. The East Cambridge Section and Somerville Section of McGrath should both be boulevards, not highways.
2. McGrath Highway should be renamed so that it is no longer called a highway.
3. The City of Cambridge vision for McGrath Highway should be consistent with the Somerville vision.
4. The project team should work with the East Cambridge Planning team and look at past proposals for this area.
5. Are the old maintenance tracks going to be removed from Cambridge Street, First Street, and O'Brien Highway?
6. Someone is at the station parking lot 24 hours a day. It feels safe. Will there be some type of security at the station?
7. Do the train cars have to be side-by-side?
8. Has the MBTA given any thought to wind energy?

July 1, 2011

9. Will there be snow removal bio-ducts?
10. What stations will open first?
11. The parking lot is not permitted to Somerville and will probably not be. This has been an issue for years.
12. Is someone from the city going to answer the question of why East Cambridge doesn't get the same accessibility?
13. How will you segregate on the property line after the station is built?
14. Will the medians be shoveled right away for pedestrians when it snows?
15. Will our ideas be ignored like before with all these public meetings like before?
16. What ideas will be used from the Cambridge Planning Studies? Has the team looked at them?
17. Is there an opportunity to get the O'Brien Highway renamed?
18. There is concern because it is rumoured that trains will be kept overnight at the Lechmeere Station, then started up at 2am and moved to Medford to begin their route. Residents do not want noise at 2am.
19. Are there water amendment plans?
20. North Point did not keep their word on any decision in the past. Therefore, concerned about any decisions they make.
21. Have you analyzed how many people will be using buses now that there is a Green Line?
22. Will there be fewer buses due to the increased T lines?
23. The number of buses should stay the same because they are still important for dropping people off at places that are in the middle of the two stations, and are still quite a far walk.
24. Does the T have any jurisdiction over what happens with the highway?
25. Will public restrooms be provided?
26. Who is going to be in charge of the road?
27. There is concern that residents were not kept up to date on the redesign of the highway.

July 1, 2011

## Attendance

Elaine Kratin  
Kristi Chase  
Rob Ricchi  
Karen Molloy  
Kris Kim  
Barbara Broussard  
Yuji Koga  
Tim Snyder  
Charles Poirier  
Tom Joyce  
Joe Avin  
Chris Matthews  
Jim McGinnis  
Catharine Hornby  
Donna Megan  
Fred Fantini  
Dennis Carlene  
Christopher Antuine  
Sandra McSheffery  
Jay Wasserman  
Michael Knapp  
Erik Rancans  
Charlie Manquarsit  
Jeff Sauser  
Barry Zevin  
Steve Kaiser  
Tracey Sciuto  
Dan Norman  
Justin Kearnan  
Mark Yoshizumi  
Doug Marc  
Alice Martin Molai  
Carole Sousa  
Rich McKinnon

Maureen Malley  
Marie Hayes  
Bob Fragone  
Derek Lombard  
Jeremy Bowman  
Milton Bevington  
Michael Baskin  
Barbara Pepel  
Ron Anderson  
Chad Triver  
Nancy Steining  
O.R. Simha  
Susanne Rasmuesen  
Phil Brake  
Health van Aelst  
Tim Toomey Jr.  
Ambika Wali  
James McSheffery  
John Paul  
Jose Estrena  
Carole Bellow  
Manish Patel  
Heather Hoffman  
Bill Deignan  
Todd Kaplan  
MaryAnn Domofrio  
Diane Georgopuloz  
Lynn Weissman  
Tait Pinnow  
Charles Button  
Sean Sullivan  
Mike Stoffel  
Mark Jaquith